

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SSM-03 NEAE-00 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01
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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1954
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION SINAI

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: MOPS, IS, LE
SUBJECT: INITIAL ISRAELI REACTIONS TO IDF OPERATION IN LEBANON

1. THAT THERE WOULD BE AN IDF OPERATION INTO LEBANON
HAS BEEN A FOREGONE CONCLUSION SINCE SATURDAY'S TERROR-
IST ATTACK. NOW THE QUESTIONS AS TO ITS TIMING, FORM,
AND DIMENSIONS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED. LITTLE SUR-
PRISE IS EXPRESSED HERE OVER THESE ASPECTS OF THE
OPERATION BUT ISRAELIS ARE UNCERTAIN OVER THEIR GOVERN-
MENT'S LONGER-TERM INTENTIONS. THERE IS SOME
INEVITABLE QUESTIONING, FOR EXAMPLE, WHETHER IT IS WISE
FOR BEGIN TO ARRIVE IN WASHINGTON WHILE PART OF
LEBANON IS UNDER IDF OCCUPATION. TODAY'S WEIZMAN-GUR
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PRESS CONFERENCE TOLD THE PUBLIC LITTLE ABOUT
LONGER TERM AIMS AND NOTHING ABOUT ANTICIPATED POLI-
TICAL REPERCUSSIONS.

2. GOVERNMENT (AND IDF) SPOKESMEN HAVE TAKEN PAINS
TO DESCRIBE THE IDF STRIKE AS A WAR OPERATION
AGAINST AN ARMED ENEMY IN CONTRAST TO PRESS REFERENCES

TO RETALIATORY MEASURES AND REPRISAL RAIDS. HOWEVER IT IS DEFINED, THE MOVE INTO LEBANON HAS THE FULL AND ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT OF THE ISRAELI PUBLIC. SOMETHING APPROACHING A WAR FEVER HAD DEVELOPED OVER THE LAST FEW DAYS AND THERE WAS A CATHARTIC SENSE OF RELIEF AND PRIDE ACCOMPANYING THE FIRST MOVEMENTS OF INFANTRY AND ARMOR INTO LEBANON LAST NIGHT. NOR SHOULD ANYONE EXPECT TO HEAR TOO MUCH GRIEF FROM ISRAELIS ABOUT ANY LOSS OF INNOCENT LIFE AFTER LAST SATURDAY'S OUTRAGE. THE OPPOSITION HAS RALLIED FIRMLY BEHIND THE GOVERNMENT. FORMER FONMIN ALLON, A LEADING OPPOSITION FIGURE, ON RADIO TODAY EXPRESSED FULL SUPPORT FOR THE OPERATION, STATING THAT ITS TIMING WAS PERFECT AND ITS DEMENSIONS APPROPRIATE.

3. THERE IS SOME CONCERN THAT SYRIA WILL BECOME INVOLVED IN A BIG WAY BUT MOST CONSIDER IT DOUBTFUL AND SAY THAT SYRIA WOULD PREFER TO CHOOSE ITS OWN TIME AND PLACE FOR ANY MAJOR ALTERCATION. WHILE IN THE CURRENT ATMOSPHERE LITTLE THOUGHT IS BEING GIVEN TO IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PEACE PROCESS, ALLON STATED THE VIEWS OF MANY WHEN HE DECLARED THAT THIS WOULD CONSTITUTE A TEST OF EGYPT'S TRUE INTENTIONS. IF EGYPT'S GOAL IS PEACE, AN ISRAELI STRIKE AGAINST A COMMON ENEMY SHOULD NOT DEFLECT IT FROM THE COURSE.

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4. BEGIN WILL RECEIVE CREDIT FOR DECISIVE AND POPULAR ACTION AND HIS STOCK WITH THE PUBLIC SHOULD RISE ACCORDINGLY. HOW LONGSTANDING THIS EFFECT WILL BE IS UNCLEAR AT THIS POINT.
VIETS

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